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BOOK REVIEWS

Estudios de Historia Argentina: El Padre José Guevara,—Don Diego de Alvear.—El Doctor Don Diego Alcorta.—Las Bases de Alberdi y el Desarrollo Constitucional. By PABLO GROUSSAC. (Buenos Aires, Jesús Menéndez, 1918. Pp. xi, 371.)

In this volume Pablo Groussac, who has long served as director of the National Library of Argentina, reprints four monographs that have appeared from time to time in the *Annals* of his library. The studies collected in this volume deal with unrelated topics in Argentine history. In the preface Groussac announces the intention of his publisher to print in book form some of his other monographs which are either inedited or out of print.

The four monographs printed in what promises to be the initial volume of Groussac's collected writings are more than mere biographical studies. For the subject of each sketch is placed into relation with his environment. The first monograph deals with a Jesuit father who, in the middle of the eighteenth century, wrote a history of Paraguay. Groussac makes a critical estimate of Guevara's history and shows that it is mainly based upon a work by Father Lozano, another Jesuit historian. The Argentine critic also makes some interesting commentaries upon the Jesuit régime in the Spanish Indies. The second monograph is concerned with a Spaniard who emigrated to the viceroyalty of La Plata in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The upshot of Groussac's essay on Diego de Alvear is a critique of the diary of José M. Cabrer which was published in Montevideo in 1882-1883. That diary purported to be Cabrer's account of the labors of the commission which tried to locate the boundary between the possessions of Spain and Portugal in South America in accordance with their treaty of 1777. Groussac demonstrates that Cabrer's diary was copied from the diary of Alvear who represented Spain on the boundary commission to which Cabrer was for a time attached in the capacity of engineer. The third monograph is a study of Diego Alcorta, who was professor of philosophy in the University of Buenos Aires from 1827 to 1842. Groussac's sketch of Professor Alcorta casts some light upon that dark period of Argentine history when Centralists and Federalists were

engaged in sanguinary struggles and when the Argentine Confederation became involved in disputes with European powers.

The fourth monograph is the *pièce de résistance*. Groussac's essay upon the *Bases* of Alberdi and constitutional development in Argentina is a critical study of Argentina's much-discussed philosopher, Juan Bautista Alberdi, and of his influence upon the framers of the Argentine constitution of 1853—a constitution which, with some modifications, still serves as the fundamental charter of the Argentine nation. In that essay, Groussac is not only a critic, he is also a polemist. Some students of Argentine constitutional history will regret that the erudite author did not somewhat modify his opinions concerning the Argentine constitution of 1853, especially in view of the criticisms which have been made of them by a young Argentine scholar. In this monograph, in particular, the reviewer felt that the footnotes were occasionally lacking in the specific detail which would prove useful to North American students of Argentine history.

The volume under review contains four noteworthy studies by one of the leading historical critics of South America. The reviewer hopes that the publisher will complete his task of publishing in collected form certain works of Señor Groussac. In this way North American historical students may hope to become acquainted with some critical and illuminating studies which have been written by the director of the great library that was founded by Mariano Moreno.

WILLIAM SPENCE ROBERTSON.

British Exploits in South America: A History of British Activities in Exploration, Military Adventure, Diplomacy, Science, and Trade in South America. By W. H. KOEBEL. (New York: The Century Company, 1917. Pp. xiv, 587. Illus. \$4.00.)

The author of this book in his prefatory statement claims for his work "a total lack of haste in its preparation". There was no "rapid gathering together of material", but rather "a lengthy process of selection" (p. vii). Even to such a prolific writer as Mr. Koebel—he has "managed to deliver" himself of "eighteen books" (p. viii)—such advantages must have been found necessary to the performance of the large task suggested by the title of this volume, but their enjoyment makes his responsibilities correspondingly great.

This book is divided into four very uneven parts. The first describes the experiences of the early navigators, adventurers, and "buc-